[11 cont.]

764 On the third day comes "fa-sang" [burial]. In former
[177] times the body was wrapped in a straw mat, but now it is laid in a coffin. This is the result of Chinese influence and practiced by those who live near the Chinese. At the time of burial, a small tree of about ten feet long is split in two, its bark peeled off and the two ends tied with ropes. The corpse is then placed on it and carried away on the shoulders. When the procession leaves the house the filial son walks in front, followed by the women mourners, whose long, show laments and plaintive cries are too sad to hear. Arriving at a mountain spot they dig the earth [12] to make a well, the four walls of which are lined with stone slabs. Into the well the coffin is lowered. If the body is wrapped in a straw mat, its two sides are left empty. On the top of the well more stone slabs are laid and then some earth. The tombs are all laid crosswise, hence the expression, "hêng Miao, tao Ch'i-lao [crosswise Miao and upside down Ch'i-lao]. After burial the guests all return to their respective homes.
766 The Miao are superstitiously prejudiced against repeat figures
777 in the age of the deceased, such as 22 or 33, believing that these
[801] figures would cause the dead to receive extra punishment in the spirit world and at the same time bring bad luck to the family. To overcome this mishap they jack up the coffin in some deep mountain, without letting it touch the earth on the theory that in so doing the spirit of the dead would not be admitted that year to the spirit world. In similar instances the Ch'ing Miao, whose dead is wrapped up in a straw mat, would hang the corpse high up on some lofty cliff in some wild area without letting it touch the earth to avoid damnation.

5. Culture

796 1) Religion. There is strictly no religion to speak of among
[771] the Miao-I in Kweichow. After living in the mountain village, they have come to respect the forest behind it, which they call
[782] "hou lung" [back dragon] and once every spring they offer sacrifice to the mountain forest. After the sacrifice they

/176 cont./

[756] [787] and this knowledge are not acquired through learning; the office of the shaman is not even necessarily handed down from father to son, though this is possible, but primarily the shaman is a person who has been chosen by the spirits. Usually each village has several shamans, who, it is assumed, are not equally powerful. [554] Their rating depends on the successes accomplished by the individual shamans. A person may turn to one in less important cases and to another in more important cases or if the first shaman has failed.

[562] [554] Similarly, the position of the shaman does not depend on the sex, although female shamans are much rarer than male ones. Both male and female shamans, when they are not engaged in their special activities, live /Color Pl. II appears here on an unnumbered page/ /177/ exactly like the other members of the tribe, from whom, if they are men, they are in no way distinguished, except for a small distinguishing mark (Fig. 40). [302] The female shamans are recognizable only by their hair style; they do not wear the long hair of the women, but have the head either close-cropped or wear the male hair-style, depending on the instructions given to them by the teacher-spirit of the shamans.

[292] The latter also determines the color of the distinguishing mark of the shamans, a small fabric cross that is sewed on the back of the blouse and is worn only while a ceremony is being performed. /Fig. 40 appears here./ Sometimes small silver coins, usually of Chinese origin, are sewed in two or four ends of the fabric cross. This, too, would have been ordered by the teacher-spirit of the shamans.

428 756 787 [782] [776] [801] If a shaman is about to die and wants to designate one of his sons as his successor, this is done in ceremonial fashion. He sacrifices four candles and four small bowls of tea to the teacher-spirit of all the shamans, kǒ nǒ kǒ tsū, and the three pairs of assistant spirits, tă fŭ yé, lĭ fŭ yé, and săn fŭ yé. The teacher-spirit and each pair of assistants are entitled to one candle and one bowl; moreover, four is the lucky number of the Meau. Now the gongs are beaten and the magic rattle is sounded until the shaman believes that the spirits are present. He now asks them to lend their assistance to his son, whose name he mentions, just as they have to him during his years of activity, for he himself is now too old to continue to perform his duties.

/184 cont./

755 if you were floating above the clouds pursued by evil spirits. Never leave his body again!"

The patient then sits down in his place. Meanwhile the shaman has imperturbably continued his conjurations. After a quarter of an hour the chief repeats the ceremony with the [782] spirit-paper; then he lights four new incense candles and puts them next to the almost consumed original candles in the vessel on the altar, where the fat-lamp continues to burn. After each action the chief and his eldest son immediately return to their places behind the shaman, who always remains facing the altar. The patient returns to the bench next to the hearth fire. In this way the first hour passes.

At the beginning of the ceremony the occupants of the house conversed with one another freely; now some of them leave the house, the rest remain silent and intently watch the proceedings. Suddenly in the midst of things a Meau woman who does not belong to the community comes and appeals simultaneously to the shaman and the chief: "I am suffering. I have had stomach pains for days. I beg you to help me." Jerkily, the shaman interrupts his conjurations and suddenly answers in a natural voice. He promises to assist the woman the next day and she is to prepare a dog sacrifice. The woman thanks him and leaves the house, and the shaman again begins his rhythmical motions, conjurations, and commands. Suddenly he stops and in his ordinary voice says that evil spirits are approaching. Tsin Tsai and his eldest son quickly step over to the shaman's bench together and hold it firmly, while the chief wife of the chief picks up the gong and beats it uninterruptedly as her husband had done formerly. Jerkily, and for us quite unexpectedly, the shaman jumps on the bench once with both feet simultaneously and then once again, for an /Ill. 30-34 appear here on unnumbered pages/ /185/ evil spirit has crept in among the good ones. • [801] Since uneven numbers are regarded as unfavorable and pernicious among the Meau, they are preferred for driving away evil spirits. Accordingly, the chief now takes three handfuls of the prepared maize and rice kernels and scatters them in all directions. His chief wife takes water into her mouth and spits it out in all the

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 253]